

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, VN, US

SUBJECT: SPOKESMAN'S REMARKS TO PRESS

1. FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM UNDISTRIBUTED UNCLASSIFIED
TRANSCRIPT FOR YOUR INFORMATION OF REMARKS TO PRESS FEB. 11
BY WHITE HOUSE ASSOCIATE PRESS SECRETARY SCHECTER FOLLOW-
ING PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF LEAGUE OF
FAMILIES OF MIA'S.

2. BEGIN QUOTE. MR. SCHECTER: THE PRESIDENT MET FOR ABOUT
40 MINUTES WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE LEAGUE OF FAMI-
LIES, AND WE POSTED THE LIST OF THE FIVE REPRESENTATIVES.
ALSO ATTENDING THE MEETING WERE DR. BRZEZINSKI, THE PRESI-
DENT'S ASSISTANT FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS; PHILIP
HABIB, UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS;
CAPTAIN RAY VOHDEN, WHO IS DIRECTOR OF THE POW-MIA TASK
FORCE AT THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, AND WHO YOU MIGHT BE
INTERESTED TO KNOW WAS A POW IN NORTH VIETNAM FROM 1965 TO
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1973; FRANK SIEVERTS, WHO IS THE POW-MIA DIRECTOR IN THE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE.

...

THE PRESIDENT TOLD THE GROUP THAT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIS

CAMPAIGN COMMITMENTS, HE PLANS TO SEND A DELEGATION TO VIETNAM, BUT THAT HE HAS NO SPECIFIC TIMETABLE AS YET, THAT HE HOPES FOR A THOROUGH ACCOUNTING AND RETURN OF REMAINS.

QUESTION: THOROUGH ACCOUNTING OF WHAT?

MR. SCHECTER: FOR A THOROUGH ACCOUNTING, FOR THE FULLEST POSSIBLE ACCOUNTING FOR ALL MEN LOST IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE RETURN OF THE REMAINS OF AS MANY MEN AS POSSIBLE.

HE ALSO TOLD THE GROUP THAT THE PRESENT MORATORIUM ON THE REVIEW OF STATUS OF MIA'S WILL CONTINUE UNLESS THERE IS A REQUEST FOR A REVIEW BY THE NEXT OF KIND.

QUESTION: IN OTHER WORDS, THEY REMAIN ON MIA STATUS?

MR. SCHECTER: FOR THE PRESENT TIME.

QUESTION: UNLESS THE FAMILY ASKS IT?

MR. SCHECTER: RIGHT, FOR THE PRESENT TIME UNTIL THERE IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO PURSUE THIS PROBLEM FURTHER WITH THE VIETNAMESE.

QUESTION: JERRY, WHAT IS THE TOTAL OF MIA'S? CAN WE HAVE THAT?

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MR. SCHECTER: THE TOTAL NUMBER COVERED IS 2505. WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE INFORMATION ON THAT NUMBER.

QUESTION: THAT IS THROUGHOUT INDOCHINA?

MR. SCHECTER: THAT IS RIGHT.

QUESTION: YOU SAID THE PRESIDENT SAID RETURN OF THE REMAINS? DID HE INDICATE TO THEM THAT HE FEELS THAT NOBODY IS ALIVE?

MR. SCHECTER: HE DIDN'T DEAL WITH THAT QUESTION. IT WASN'T ASKED AND HE DIDN'T ANSWER IT.

QUESTION: HE DIDN'T INDICATE HE HAD ACCEPTED THE MONTGOMERY COMMITTEE'S REPORT AS A FINAL ACCOUNTING THEN, IS THAT CORRECT, JERRY?

...

MR. SCHECTER: NO. BUT IN HIS MEETING WITH THE MONTGOMERY COMMITTEE HE DID EXPLAIN THAT HE THOUGHT THAT THEY HAD DONE AN EXCELLENT JOB.

...

QUESTION: DID HE OFFER ANY MORE INSIGHT AS TO WHEN THIS DELEGATION WOULD GO TO VIETNAM?

MR. POWELL: NO. HE SAID THERE WAS NO SPECIFIC TIMETABLE.

QUESTION: JERRY, COLONEL HOPPER, WHO SPOKE TO US AFTER THE MEETING, SAID THAT HE FEELS ASSURED THE PRESIDENT IS GOING TO TRY TO GET A REOPENING OF NEGOTIATIONS IN PARIS.

DID HE IN FACT SAY THAT TO THEM? DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA?
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HE DID NOT SAY DIRECTLY WHETHER OR NOT THE PRESIDENT SAID HE WILL DO THIS?

MR. SCHECTER: THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIS CAMPAIGN COMMITMENT, HE WANTS TO SEND A DELEGATION TO VIETNAM. THE PRESIDENT DIDN'T ADDRESS HIMSELF TO THE PARIS QUESTION.

QUESTION: COLONEL HOPPER SAYS THEY MADE THREE PROPOSALS, IF YOU WILL BEAR WITH ME A MOMENT.

MR. SCHECTER: SURE.

QUESTION: ONE, RENEGOTIATIONS WITH THE VIETNAMESE IN PARIS, A HALT IN THE STATUS REVIEW, AS YOU SAY, AND THE APPOINTMENT OF A PRESIDENTIAL TASK FORCE.

HE SAID THAT HE IS CONFIDENT THE PRESIDENT IS GOING TO TAKE STEPS TO REOPEN THE DOOR WITH VIETNAM AND LATER SAID SPECIFICALLY ON THE NEGOTIATIONS. DOES HE HAVE ANYTHING--

MR. SCHECTER: YOU ARE ADDING THE PARIS POINT.

QUESTION: YES, HE SAID PARIS. COLONEL HOPPER SAID PARIS. I DON'T KNOW. I WASN'T THERE.

MR. SCHECTER: I WOULD JUST ASK YOU TO TAKE MY STATEMENT AS TO WHAT THE PRESIDENT SAID. I DON'T WANT TO ENGAGE IN A DIALOGUE.

QUESTION: WHAT WAS HIS RESPONSE TO THE PRESIDENTIAL TASK
FORCE REQUEST?

MR. SCHECTER: HE SAID HE WOULD CONSIDER IT AND RESERVE

JUDGMENT ON IT.
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QUESTION: WAS THERE ANY MENTION MADE IN THE MEETING BY
EITHER SIDE OF DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION?

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QUESTION: DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION, WAS THIS MENTIONED BY
EITHER SIDE IN THE MEETING--U.S. DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION
OF VIETNAM?

MR. SCHECTER: WHEN THE DELEGATION GOES TO VIETNAM, IT WILL
CONSIDER THE WHOLE RANGE OF OUTSTANDING ISSUES, INCLUDING
OUR RELATIONS WITH VIETNAM AND THE QUESTION OF MIA'S AND
OTHER OUTSTANDING ISSUES. END QUOTE.

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*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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